R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 019 688 CG 001 878

THE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY AS A MODEL FOR COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH.

BY- BERNS, ROBERT S.
AMERICAN ORTHOPSYCHIATRIC ASSN., NEW YORK, N.Y.

PUB DATE MAR 68

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.48 10P.

DESCRIPTORS- *COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT, STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES, *STUDENT COLLEGE RELATIONSHIP, COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES, *MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS, *COMMUNITY ATTITUDES, *PSYCHIATRISTS,

ASPECTS OF COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH WITHIN THE STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY PSYCHIATRIST ARE EXPLORED. THE PSYCHIATRIST CAN OFFER DIRECTION AND INSIGHT IN DECISION-MAKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING OF THE CONFLICTS EXISTING BETWEEN STUDENTS AND ADMINISTRATORS. IN DOING THIS, THE PSYCHIATRIST MUST VIEW GROUP PROBLEMS IN TERMS OF THE COMMUNITY RATHER THAN IN TERMS OF INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOPATHOLOGY. A CRUCIAL PROBLEM IS THE RISE IN STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS, RESULTING IN DEMANDS FOR SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THEIR SCHOOLS. ANOTHER IS THE RIVALRY EXISTING AMONG THE DIFFERENT UNIVERSITIES, BOTH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC. A PSYCHIATRIST SERVING AS CONSULTANT TO THE DEAN OF STUDENTS HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPLY COMMUNITY PSYCHIATRY TO ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENTS, TACKLING SUCH DIVERSE MATTERS AS VISITATION HOURS IN DORMITORIES, CURRICULUM INNOVATIONS, STUDENT ACTIVISM, AND CONSULTATION WITH FACULTY MEMBERS, STUDENTS, AND ADMINISTRATORS. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE AMERICAN ORTHOPSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION MEETING (CHICAGO, MARCH 1968). (CG)

ED019688

THE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY AS A MODEL FOR COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

Robert S. Berns, M.D.

Psychiatrist in Consultation
Dean of Students Office
University of California, Los Angeles
405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90024

Paper for presentation at American
Orthopsychiatric Association Meeting,
Chicago, March, 1968

CG 001 878

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

The Study of the University as a Model for Community Mental Health

This study purports to deal with intrauniversity crosscurrents which enhance or inhibit the emotional climate within the university. Despite the fact that research goes on from within the university, directed towards the whole spectrum of community mental health outside of the university, very little has been done to explore aspects of community mental health within the structure of the university.

In the November 1967 issue of the Journal of the American Psychiatric Association, a separate section was devoted to College Students and Mental Health. One paper is entitled College Psychiatry as Public Health Psychiatry (Reifler, Liptzin and Fox, pp. 662-671).[4] These writers state that "Public health is the scientific diagnosis and treatment of the community. The community not just the individual is the patient." Yet nothing in their prescription is directed at the total community but only at the student population. We propose that a psychiatrist contribute his insights to the decision-making process in each department of the university. Starting rather feebly, invitations may be forthcoming from the various faculties to do just this. The contributions made by the psychiatrist may also be feeble at first but hopefully insights can be offered which lend direction and mutual respect of psychiatry and other disciplines in problem-solving for the tremendous conflicts which now exist and which no one discipline is able to solve separately.

After the student uprisings at Berkeley, administrative heads at various universities intensified an examination of causes for student dissent. At the University of California various institutes which had for some time studied student behavior now also focused on matters of student-faculty-administrative

relationships and in the United States generally, more consideration has been given to unrest on the campus in the past five years than in the previous fifty years. Except for notable exceptions as Katz's Study of the Berkeley Uprisings,(1) most considerations dealing with changes in students and universities emanate from pragmatic-minded administrators or news correspondents.

For the most part, people in the psychiatric, psychological, or social sciences have not been in on decision-making even in instances where they examine the conditions. There are understandable reasons that psychiatrists shun this role. Szass(5) gave a paper at the AOA meeting in Washington last year on college psychiatrists and said that a psychiatrist in a university cannot be true to his patient or the university. No doubt one has to struggle with opposing forces in assuming the role of psychiatrist to the campus community, but the need is great. In times of crises, it is possible to prevail on administrators to neutralize authoritarian stands, and sometimes humor, sometimes an unconscious insight may save the day. I would postulate that administrators dream of small animals and insects devouring the world but, alas, sometimes it goes beyond that and depression is not uncommon in administrative circles.

We see instances in which psychoanalysts categorize those interested in social psychiatry as having forsaken psychoanalysis altogether, and of course there are all gradations of this problem because it is difficult to translate the dynamics of individual psychopathology into group dynamics. Nevertheless, the sociologist and anthropologist need the collaboration of the psychiatrist, and the social psychiatrist needs them as well in piecing together the fabric of social psychiatry.

Psychiatrists tend to identify individual neurotic patterns and are more

apt to view group process in terms of individual psychopathology but this can be as disatrous and as frogmentary as when the sociologist examines only group process without any understanding of individuals. The sociologist seeks a research model based on scientific methods of investigation whereas the psychiatrist traditionally arrived at conclusions based on in-depth study of an individual. Both have a contribution to offer but each one considers it unprofessional to collaborate. Likewise, the psychologist and psychiatrist view each other suspiciously and often try to undermine each other. Students are caught up in this type of environment and it is no wonder that they come to see each specialty in the university as frogmented, incomplete and narcissitic.

Individualism is the cult of the Horatio Alger model but it is outmoded by the very scientific technology which has evolved from that model. True enough, the Horatio Algers see the fault more in the welfare state than in their own technology, but certainly in our universities individualism is denied to students and even tenured professors who question public policy are all but excommunicated. Students are more likely to be recognized not as individuals but as activists or hippies, fraternity types, lettermen types, or for most students, not to be recognized at all. Thus, to delve into the neurotic pattern of an activist or of a hippie one could discern considerable psychopathology, but if one considers a group as having evolved from societal forces, then the group may symbolize a force for good. Thus, McGlothlin(3) views the hippies as akin to the early Christians. Much of the activist movement is a healthy aspect of adolescence. Here again, the psychiatrist treating the individual must make different judgments than the psychiatrist treating the community. And I do not mean to say that the latter must join forces with the administrator, but he must help both factions seek a mutual understanding. In the end, the task may really be no different, for the psychiatrist must help the individual reconcile himself to opposing forces of it and

super ego and the community psychiatrist must help the campus community reconcile itself to the opposing forces of all its constituents.

Adlai Stevenson coined the term "revolution of ~~using~~ RISING expectations"* and the term applies whether one considers the peasants of the French revolution, the new militancy of American Negroes or of present day students who have gained more rights and privileges and the abundance of an affluent society but at the same time have been part of a population explosion which leaves them very much neglected by an older generation and left to struggle through adolescence by themselves. Colleges are no longer little enclaves of refuge for students or faculty and faculty find more rewards in the market place from research, consultation with business and industry, writing or travel than from confrontation with masses of undifferentiated students. What I am saying then is that one does not rise up and seek more if he is completely subjugated but only does he do so when he comes to expect that more is attainable. Certainly it is the affluence of American society and of American universities that leads students to want more substantial improvements than sandbox politics and cursory curriculum reform. If now students are dissatisfied with the sand box and indeed throwing sand, it is possible that the groups of students who protest both at what transpires within the university and in society outside of the university must be heard. It may be like a catechism for the psychiatrist to identify rationalization or resistance in groups but it may or may not be applicable.

We can say of universities now that they are having acute anxiety reactions. Berkeley has felt strong sibling rivalry for younger institutions in the

---

* See Waelder, Robt. in bibliography[6].

University of California system. UCLA behaved very much like a younger sibling oblivious to Berkeley's jealousy. Nevertheless, the rivalries of the nine campuses in the University of California system constitute interesting material for psychodynamic formulation and deserve more than a cursory glance. So too, does examination of rivalries of private institutions versus public universities merit more than gentlemanly discourse.*

Macht, Scherl and English[2] in a report from the office of Economic Opportunity on Psychiatric Consultation, titled The Job Corps Experience, report

> "that the consultant has noticed an evolution in his relationships at the Center from distance and distrust by the staff, through a phase of apparent trust and openness followed by almost complete staff withdrawal, to a current state of what seems to be a more cautious involvement."

My initial welcome to the university and subsequent course followed somewhat parallel lines. Certain faculties consistently seek help in discussion of student affairs and sometimes in seeking help with faculty posture, but almost invariably the model is first to seek help in a specific student problem. My position as Consultant to the Dean of Students staff has resulted in more pure application in the capacity of community psychiatry with administrative departments than with faculty. Thus I have served as psychiatrist on a faculty committee on student conduct, I have been on committees to determine such diverse matters as visitation hours in dormitories, curriculum innovation, study of student activism, panels on drug use, talks to parents, to living groups such

---

* It has been my contention that the neglect of students by faculty caused faculty to support the FSM at Berkeley. With another confrontation in the offing at the time this paper is written it will be interesting to see what transpires.

as fraternities, committees on confidentiality, consultation to numerous departments on student behavior, and sometimes with faculty members, students and administrators.

As an illustration, the question of visitation in the dormitories refers to the privileges of students receiving members of the opposite sex in their rooms. Presently on my campus this privilege maintains on Sunday afternoons. Our dormitories have separate wings for men and women students with common dining and lounge halls. Many students seek increase in these visitation privileges. A wide diversity of attitudes come from students themselves but also from parents and the outside community. Similar questions of policy arise in respect to drinking as for example with students past 21 who do not have the same rights in dormitories as if they live away from the university. If the university is a wayside station toward achieving one's identity and autonomy when should this process commence--before college, in college--or never.

Another example of the role of the campus community psychiatrist exists in respect to the following. At UCLA we have good facilities for both psychiatric and psychological counseling for individual students. However, many students seek to set up their own types of leaderless groups or sensitivity training or invite in outside group leaders which may include hypnotists, mystics, Synanon affiliated groups ad infinitum. In the realm of the experimental college, if students invite in outside guests to teach classes, the administration frets about the possibility these people will later describe themselves as members of the university faculty, but at the same time not wanting to curtail the rights of students to hear from anyone. It is at once apparent, that a kind of establishmentariasm may develop that causes some people now in the academy to begin viewing big business as more imaginative or mobile than the academy which in the past was less aware of the world outside.

When one asks what is the function of the university, perhaps its attempt to be all things to all people makes the task nigh impossible and the results absurd. Thus it would be easier not to have to play in locum parentis for students, but there are those who would prefer not even to have students in the environs but only a community of scholars. Universities also are a wing of government. Society depends on univeristies for research, but at the same time society is suspicious of what goes on in the university, and although universities are much more public in their services than ever before, still, society does not really understand the dynamics of the university nor the process that turns out educated students. And unfortunately many students never grasp the purpose of education nor the breadth of education and alumnae attest to the poorness of their education by their inability to cope with their offspring or the world. A kind of narcissism prevails in the colleges which favors the fragmented kind of education provided. The ambiguities of present day life cause a large segment of people to seek simplistic and dogmatic solutions.

The president of a small college wrote that a group of industrialists had subsidized his college to initiate a study of how to better indoctrinate young people to want to enter business and industry. Do not these older people also need to accommodate themselves to the needs and the ideals of the student generation?

Finally, this exposition of possible functions for a psychiatrist engaged in the campus mental health field takes into account that any number of other people--sociologists, social psychologists, anthropologists, may fruitfully engage in this endeavor and that all should collaborate in the necessary work to be done.

Strong motivational forces impel students and faculty in diverse directions. Where academic excellence to the faculty implies professional orientation to the dissection of life into its ultimate particles and then its reconstruction by computers into a more perfect whole, the student seeks something far different, more poetic, more like a replacement of religion, a coherence, a morality, a set of values, a sense of the nonsense, the humour and the absurd. To mediate between the two extremes, the needs of youth and the needs of older people, the university once served its function better, for its faculty were more want to dream, than to do. Treating individual student apathy is not enough and many more people need to close in the gap now.

Bibliography

1. Katz, Joseph, Study of the Berkeley Uprisings.

2. Macht, Scherl and English, The Job Corps Experience.

3. McGlothlin, William H., Hippies and Early Christianity, Institute of Government and Public Affairs, UCLA unpublished paper.

4. Reifler, Liptzin and Fox, Journal of the Am. Psych. Assoc. Nov. '67 College Psychiatry as Public Health Psychiatry, pp. 662-671.

5. Szass, Thos. AOA mtg. Wash. 1967 on the College Psychiatrist.

6. Waelder, Robt. Progress and Revolution: A Study of the Issues of Our Age. Intl. Univ. Press N.Y., 1967.